



Responsibility!

Take your baby-sitting responsibility seriously. Part of that responsibility is protecting yourself as well as the children for whom you will be caring. Know your employer before you take the job. Check references if this will be the first time working for this person.

Before accepting the job, get specific instructions about the number and ages of the children, bed times, foods, medicines and other information about personal habits and what is expected of you. Parents typically feel confident with a baby-sitter who asks questions and who is concerned with the care of the children.

When you accept a job, arrive early to confirm all of this information. Get any additional instructions such as where the parents are going, when they will return and how they may be contacted. Determine which relative or neighbor can be called in an emergency in the event the parents cannot be reached.

Knowing first aid procedures before you take on baby-sitting jobs will help prepare you for emergencies and may save a life.

Do's and Don'ts

DO NOT allow strangers into the house unless your employer specifically informs you to let them in.

DO NOT tell a caller that you are the baby-sitter alone with the children. Take a message and tell them that the person will return the call momentarily.

DO NOT go outside to investigate suspicious noises or activities. Turn on outside lights and call the police. Be sure that all doors and windows are locked.

Important information to have on hand

Name, address and phone number of employer

- Directions to job location
- Arrange your transportation to get to location and return home
- Location and phone number of where employer can be reached in case of emergency
- Alternate person to contact for emergency if employer cannot be reached
- Special instructions from employer
- Locations and instructions on use of safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, first aid supplies
- Walk through house with employer to ensure all doors and windows are locked
- Turn outside lights on
- Have emergency numbers and note taking materials by the telephone

Home Safety Tips

When sitting at a home for the first time, the baby-sitter should obtain important fire and life safety information as well. Make sure the address is clearly posted outside. Write down the address and post it near the telephone. Make sure the phone has a 9-1-1 sticker. Walk through the home to familiarize yourself with the locations of all rooms. Determine which bedrooms children will be sleeping in and make sure there are two exits from each. Locate all exits from the home.

Each year, at least one pediatric drowning in Phoenix can be attributed to a baby-sitter who answered the telephone or spoke with friends while a toddler slipped into the family swimming pool, toilet, bathtub, dog bowl, etc. Injuries may occur to children when the baby-sitter's attention is elsewhere. A toddler may fall or pull a hot pot off the stove when the baby-sitter isn't watching. An unnoticed child may take the opportunity to play with matches when the parents have left.

Playing

Although children need you in case of an emergency like fire, injuries, or sickness, they need you for play, too. The good baby-sitter is a good player. Here are some things children play at and dangers to watch for.

- The infant is discovering his body. He likes to throw, hold, drop, tear, grab, roll. Some dangers - puts things in his mouth, helpless in water, and can easily smother.
- Toddlers are getting into everything. The toddler likes to bang, push, pull, put in, take out, jump, draw, and color. Some dangers - swallowing things, falling, matches and lighters, heaters, poisons, and the stove.
- From the age of three on, children like active physical games, arts and crafts, blocks, pretend, games of skill, and reading. Some dangers: street dangers, falls, stoves, heaters, matches and lighters.

Bring some things to play with like a notebook, magazines, colored paper, color markers, tape, and a flashlight. Surprises for the children will make the job easy for you and fun for them. Make a game of putting things back in their place.

Be Safe

- Never leave children alone. When they are alone, they can have unintentional injuries with matches, gasoline, the stove, water, poisons, falls, and drowning.
- Keep matches and lighters locked away from children.
- Trade sharp and electrical objects for something safe to play with.
- Keep portable heaters away from play areas, curtains, furniture, and the children as well. Contact burns are common for toddlers, especially if they fall against hot surfaces like space heaters.
- Don't smoke on the job. Baby-sitters have caused child deaths by smoking.

Cook Safely

- Supervise children when they are in the kitchen. This is the place for injuries with fire and hot liquids.
- You and the children should wear tight sleeves during meal preparation. Loose-fitting clothes can catch fire.
- Turn pot handles inward on the stove so children can't pull them down.
- Smother a pan fire with a lid. Never use water.
- Roll up appliance cords so they can't be pulled down.
- Put the baby in the playpen if you have a hot pot or drink in hand, so she can't get burned.

First Aid

For emergency help, call 9-1-1. Call the parents if you have questions about lesser emergencies. Notify the parents about small injuries when they return.

- For minor cuts, stop bleeding by applying gentle pressure with a clean cloth. Wash the wound and apply a bandage.
- Learn CPR. There are any number of emergencies where your knowledge of CPR could arise and be needed.
- If the child swallows something poisonous, call 9-1-1. Have the container ready so you can read it to the fire department on the phone.
- Show children how to stop, drop and roll in case their clothes catch on fire. Rolling smothers the flames. Use a blanket or rug if one is on hand. Call 9-1-1.
- Put cool water on a burn; this slows skin damage. If the skin is already blistered, dead white, brown, or charred, you need emergency help. Call 9-1-1.

Fire Escape Planning

- Check smoke detectors.
- Plan ahead. Know how to get children out of the bedrooms if the front or back doors are blocked by smoke or fire. Make sure you know in advance what all your escape options are.
- Smoke kills. Shut doors to stop it from advancing.
- Show children how to crawl under smoke to get better air near the floor.
- If there's a fire, get everybody out and then call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house.
- Don't go back to the burning house. Many people are killed returning to a burning building.